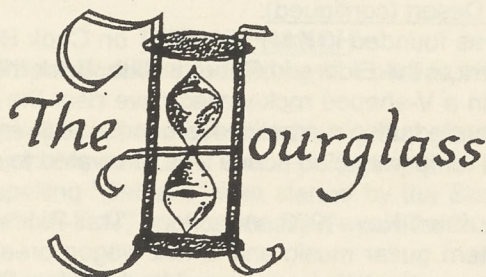


Historical Society of Palm Desert

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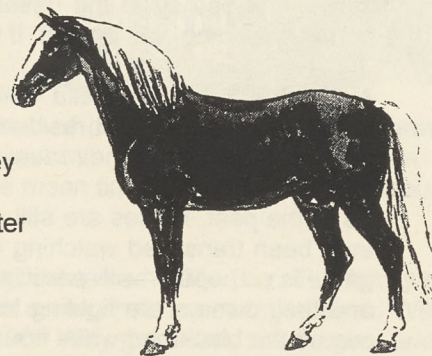
Community
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SPRING 2006

VOL. 13, NO. 1

HORSEBACK RIDING IN PALM DESERT Compiled by V. Folkers from Society Archives

A history of the early Palm Desert area would be incomplete without mention of the role horses played. This is especially true in regard to tourists, some early residents and their children. It was in 1950 that Cliff Henderson acquired property on which he later built the Shadow Mountain Stables. It was a triangular 12-acre parcel of land along the west side of the Palm Valley Storm Channel, and about 325 feet north of the State Highway (Highway 111 before it was rerouted away from Painter's Path in the mid-60s.) Four years later the complex included not only the stable buildings and corrals, but also seven apartments which could be rented at reasonable rates by Shadow Mountain employees. This complex remained a busy place until it was sold in 1966.



The Shadow Mountain Club had an oval tract which was used by local riders. The residential areas that began to develop between the Stables and the Club provided bridle paths between back yards. These are still in evidence today in some places along Joshua Tree Street, Juniper Street, etc. When we, the Folkers, bought a house on Juniper Street in 1985 we noticed that the back fence line was uneven.....our lot was shorter than the one behind us. Our realtor, Bill Waring, told us that they had incorporated the 30-foot bridle path into their back yard.

Palm Desert's bridle trail heading for 'last roundup' was the title of a Post article on 2-9-67. The 20-year old trail was 30-foot wide and required a 15-foot easement across the back of residential property on some streets. It started at San Luis Rey and extended west to Tumbleweed, across Shadow Mountain Drive to Ocotillo, and then to Highway 74. By this time the trail was rarely used and was barely passable because of uncontrolled overgrowth. The Palm Desert Property Owners Association was circulating a petition to get 80 of 181 persons to agree to make the easement accessible to utility companies.

The bridle trail closing was addressed eight years later by the very talented writer, Chuck Shelton, who had a regular column in the Post. This man could not only give you interesting information, but he was so funny as to put his readers in stitches. Where, oh where, are the Chuck Sheltons in today's newspapers? In this particular article he quotes part of the restrictions filed in 1946 on approximately 1000 lots encompassed in the Palm Desert Property Owners Association. The restrictions read, in part: "There shall not be erected or permitted ... foundry, quarry ... crematory, stable, cattleyard, corral, slaughterhouse, hog pen, pickle factory ... carpet beating plant, tannery ... and no cows, pigs, sheep, goats ... and other barnyard animals ... provided however that horses ... or game may be maintained on said property ..." As you noticed, corrals and cattleyards and stables are taboo, but "horses" are OK. Where would you keep your horse or horses if you lived in the property owners boundaries? Tethered to the mailbox? Off the patio?

In December 1953 the Palm Desert Boosters hosted 23 Travellarians, a group associated with travel agents from the Los Angeles area. They were housed at the White Sun Guest Ranch. Activities included a Western B-B-Q, horseback riding in the desert, and attending the sixth annual ball at Shadow Mountain Club. So you can see that horses figured in heavily as part of the tourist attractions of the Palm Desert area.

An article by Frank Bogert in the Palm Springs Villager, Sept. 1956 issue, shows a picture of a polo game in progress. Hank Gogerty, owner of Palm Desert Air Park (now Rancho Las Palmas Resort) built a turf field right next to his airport runway. Fliers could taxi in and watch the polo game while seated in their planes.

Horseback Riding in Palm Desert (continued):

The Eldorado Polo Club was founded in the Fall of 1957 on Cook Road off Fairway Drive with the cooperation of Mr. Robert McCulloch, President of the Eldorado Country Club. Back then Eldorado was considered part of Palm Desert. The stables were located in a V-shaped rock-walled cove near the southwest corner of the property. Over the years two polo fields were constructed, also a practice field and a stick and ball area, in addition to stabling for 200 ponies. In 1962 the Country Club's temporary club house was renovated to meet the requirements of polo players.

A Palm Desert Post article dated Nov. 1963 announces "Trail Rides Return to Desert." The old-fashioned trail ride on horseback, including Western guitar music and chuck wagon breakfasts, are coming back to the desert after eight years of lying dormant. These were being sponsored by the Silver Spur Stables. Rides in which 30 to 50 guests could participate started at Silver Spur Ranch at 9:00 a.m. and stopped at 11:00 a.m. at Dead Indian Canyon where breakfast was served. They would take a short-cut back to Silver Spur, arriving at noon. Sign-ups were for five days in succession. The cost of the entire package was \$6.00. The original trail rides started in this area in 1936. Silver Spur set up their rides to replicate those that were used in the old west, and to give guests a chance to appreciate the natural beauty of the desert away from all the tourist attractions. They assured guests that getting sore from horseback riding was a myth. If the saddle fits the rider and the horse, you can ride all day without any problems.

Also in 1963 the Coachella Valley Vaqueros organized their first annual rodeo event at the Indio Fairgrounds in the Fall. Many Palm Desert residents belonged to this group of horseback riders, and young ladies were encouraged to apply to be queen of the rodeo. These events were advertised as being a lot of ropin', ridin' and rambunctious fun.

As in the past, horses are still part of the picture. Much of what we hear about is associated with polo. If you have ever been transfixed watching the moves of graceful horse and rider in a polo game, you will understand why the game is so popular with participants and spectators alike. Of course, there are horses being kept on outlying ranches and their owners are fighting to keep developments from taking over their properties. Bill Boyd "Hopalong Cassidy" owned the black-and-white house on Joshua Tree Street during Palm Desert's early history. For a while he was able to exercise his horse, Topper, in the empty lot west of his house. Presently there is a house being built on that lot. Maybe we can't stop progress but, hopefully, there will always be places for horses in Palm Desert.

DONATIONS TO THE ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Virginia Anderson - c/o Rick Fromme: 11 articles for the paper archives, 83 issues of Desert Magazine from 1967 through 1976

Linda Carter: 14 items for the category - Hotels & Motels - Deep Canyon Inn (includes photo prints, brochures, rates, letters, and a timeline)

Jackie Damron: researched and wrote a report about the history of Palm Desert -- Jackie is one of our new docents and she wrote this history so the docents would be better informed. Thanks, Jackie !!

Paul & Karen Clements: 44 issues of Desert - Magazine of the Southwest

Note: If you have materials of significance to local history, please consider donating them to the Society.

DOCENT / VOLUNTEER NEWS

Jean Ernst, committee chair, expresses appreciation for all the enthusiastic, new docents who are covering the extra hours since the Board of Directors decided to expand the Society's schedule to Monday thru Saturday (six days a week) -- 10 A.M. until 3 P.M. This new schedule has proved very effective in attracting more citizens of the valley as well and out-of-town visitors. Jean wants to assemble a list of members for occasional docent duty, so she will have substitutes to call in case the regulars cannot come at their assigned times. It's a great way to meet new people and get reacquainted with old friends. If you are interested in doing other volunteer work than being a docent, we have all kinds of ways you can help us. You can reach Jean at 346-0041, or talk to Anne at 346-6588.

Everyone is welcome to a training meeting on Thursday, March 9 at 3:00 P.M. Bob Green, retired fireman and owner of the fire-fighting tools in our main exhibit, has consented to tell you about the fire fighting equipment and how it was used. It is especially important for new docents to hear this talk, and a refresher is always good for all volunteers.

MANY THANKS TO ANNE JAPENGA

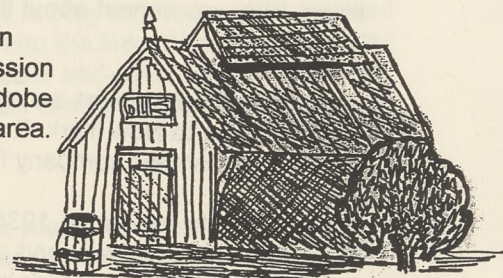
Anne writes an interesting historical article for the monthly issues of the Desert Sun's "Desert Magazine." In the most recent issue she talks about her experiences visiting Palm Desert Historical Society museum, as well as others in the area. We owe her a vote of thanks for letting the general public know that we offer exciting exhibits, photos, video-viewing, and face-to-face conversation with pioneers and knowledgeable docents.

GILMAN RANCH

From G.R. publications, edited by V. Folkers, HS Curator

This historic landmark lies in the Banning area, and boasts a history that goes back to the Cahuilla tribe. Because of the abundant supply of food and water in this canyon, it was a perfect spot for Indian habitation. By the way, some of these early inhabitants say that the spelling "Cahuilla" was started by the Spanish who came later. They would be inclined to spell the name of their clan "K-A-Y-A", or phonetically it would be "Ka-wee-Yah" in English.

Later the land came under the Spanish government and was part of the San Gorgonio Rancho, which was used for cattle-raising and was allied with Mission San Gabriel. In 1854 Jose Pope, a ranch foreman for Isaac Hills, built an adobe house on the property. It was the first permanent landmark in the Banning area. Pope sold to G. Chapin in 1862 and a year later Newton Noble bought the land. He is credited with opening the first post office in the Pass locality in 1868. Also, because William Bradshaw's road followed old Indian trails along his property, Noble converted the adobe into a stage stop.



In 1869 James Gilman purchased the 160-acre ranch along with 200 head of horses and cattle. He operated the stage stop, married in 1871, had seven children, and lived in the adobe until 1879. They built a frame house, expanded to 500 acres, and switched from cattle to grains and fruit. In the mean time, the railroad went through and stage coaches were no longer used for passenger transportation.

The ranch is best known in connection with the story of a young Paiute Indian named Willie Boy. The family of Mike Boniface, along with his daughter Elota, was camped at the Gilman Ranch during fruit harvesting season. Willie was determined to possess Elota against her father's wishes. One evening in 1909 Willy got drunk, stole a gun, and shot Mike in his sleep. Willie commanded the girl to go with him. As days passed, many volunteers joined the posse that was searching for the two. Finally they found Elota's body in the desert. The hunt for Willie continued, but he became very sick from eating an undercooked lizard and drinking bad water. The posse found Willie, but he held them off with his sharp-shooting. After three weeks he eventually committed suicide by using his big toe to fire his rifle at himself.

The story of Willie Boy somehow got intertwined with President Taft's trip out west, so the incident received national coverage. A book was written, a movie was made, and the legend of "Willie Boy" is now part of the folklore of Banning and Gilman Ranch.

A field trip: On Saturday, December 3, six Society members went to see the Gilman Ranch House, a replica of the one that burned to the ground in 1977. It was a 10-month project with a price tag of \$700,000. Our group enjoyed going through the house and talking to docents in period dress, seeing the blacksmiths at work, walking the grounds and the fruit orchard, and spending time in the wagon museum. We recommend this enjoyable experience to you.

The Inn at Deep Canyon

From archival donations by Linda Carter

In 1964 the Sandra La motel was opened by Ella Fern, her mother and step-father, and George Chandley. It is located at 74-470 Abronia Trail in Palm Desert just off of Deep Canyon and south of Highway 111. After 10 years the business was purchased by Jim & Fran Richards. The name was changed to Deep Canyon Inn in 1985. The present owner, Arnold Kirschenbaum, bought the place in January 1995 and it is now known as the Inn at Deep Canyon. If you have met Linda Carter, General Manager of the Inn, you know that she is a very friendly person. The Chamber of Commerce has named her "Ambassador" any number of times. Linda spreads the word that the "Inn" is the very best, and she makes sure the place operates on a paying basis.

ANNUAL FIREHOUSE YARD SALE -- 2006

We are actively collecting saleable discards for this year's sale to be held on Saturday & Sunday, October 28 & 29, from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. both days. You can drop off your donations in the backyard or call 346-6588 for a pick-up; if nobody answers the phone, leave a message and we will get back to you A.S.A.P. We can use all the usual items, toys, tools, sporting goods, antiques, jewelry -- everything except mattresses, bed pillows, clothing, and shoes. We would appreciate you spreading the word to family, friends, and even strangers having garage sales. Receipts for income tax deductions are available upon request.

FLY GIRLS
American Experience Documentary
Funded by the Alfred Sloan Foundation

- from notes by V. Folkers, HSPD Curator (7-20-05)

In an era when few women had licenses to drive automobiles, a group took instructions to fly airplanes. It was the early 1940s, at the height of World War II. One of the leaders in this innovative project was most accomplished, her name was Jacqueline Cochran. Another lady, who was high on the list of women aviators was Amelia Earhart. In order to promote interest in the field, she spoke at schools in order to recruit girls who might have an interest in flying. She was honest about the discrimination they would face and also about the danger... 38 women died in the line of duty.

Jacqueline Cochran was an orphan raised in a family of eight. For a while she worked in a textile factory until she decided to go to New York. It was there that she met Floyd Odlum while she was employed in a beauty salon. He financed a cosmetic company for her.

Jackie loved to fly, and in 1938 she won the Transcontinental Bendix air race. She was a very aggressive person, clever, energetic, driven, and always with tenacity of purpose. Every situation was black or white, win or lose. Her persuasive powers were also considerable, as she talked 24 women into flying for a ferrying service for the British.

After the Pearl Harbor bombing, a high volume of planes were being manufactured in the United States and the government needed people to fly them from the factories to the airports. An American named Nancy Love initiated the W.A.F.S. Ferrying Squadron. The members of this group were offered \$3000 a year, but they were not licensed pilots.



Jackie Cochran returned from Britain and began a training program for what she called W.A.S.P.S. She put out the call and 830 women, ages 21 to 35, accepted the challenge. The school took over Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas... it was then dubbed "Cochran's Convent." After cleaning out the snakes, tarantulas, and black widow spiders the school was ready to open. The requirements for graduation were 400 hours of schooling and 200 hours of flight time. One out of three women

washed out of the program and was gone by that same evening. Those who finished, flew in the ferry command. A great variety of aircraft had to be moved, and these women did the job. By 1943 they were working seven days a week.

At Camp Davis the men made it known that members of the W.A.S.P.S. were not welcome. Because of fowl play and sabotage -- even putting sugar in the gas tanks -- two women died and one was injured.

Jackie wanted military recognition for the W.A.S.P.S. In 1944 pilot training was shut down. In June of that year, congress noted "no" as to having women in the Air Force. Cochran reported that her group had done 60 million miles of flight in a variety of aircraft. When Hap Arnold announced that the W.A.S.P.S were being disbanded, he noted that the program had been a tremendous success. Subsequently, President Jimmy Carter signed documents making these women officially recognized veterans.

It is doubtful that these feats could have been accomplished by any other woman than by Jacqueline Cochran. She earned the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force Reserves, but that's not the end of the story, because in 1953 she was the first woman to break the sound barrier. Aren't we fortunate here in the Coachella Valley that she chose to live here on the Odlum Ranch in Indio (now Indian Palms Country Club), making her history our history.

NEW MEMBERS

Wes & Betty Oeding (Supporting)

Steve & Beth Lodge (Family)

E. L. & Beverly Starcher (Family)

MEMBERS WHO LIVE IN OUR MEMORIES

Sandi Van Vliet, a native of California, died on January 20 after a bout with cancer. She was married to Chris Van Vliet on November 26, 1976. After working as interior designer and partner at Steve Chase Associates for 17 years, she started her own design firm in 2002, specializing in high-end custom homes throughout the country.

MEMBERSHIP: We value our members and want them to multiply. Is this a high priority for you too ???

CALICO EARLY MAN SITE**A Presentation in the Old Firehouse Lecture Series****From notes taken by Dick Folkers, Society Vice-President**

The speaker was Fred Budinger, Bureau of Land Management site manager. Fred was with the Tetra Tec Company for 30 years. He talked about the Calico archaeological site, which is the best in the United States for its content and age; also, it is the most controversial. It is located near Yermo, about 16 miles from Barstow. Artifacts which have been unearthed include tools, a scraper and a reamer - judged to be 100,000 to 200,000 years old.

The initial dig was begun by Dr. Louis Lecki, who also worked in Africa. The site is known for showing the diversity of native Americans in California. It indicates that they were hunters and gatherers, a very mobile people who lived prior to the Indians. The idea that these may have been the earliest human entry into the New World is under a lot of contention. In fact, most of the archaeological finds in California over the years and their dating have been controversial. Both the finders and their writings and conclusions have been given a rough time and ridiculed by those who hold other convictions.

GOLF CART PARADE

This year the parade was held on January 8. The schedule was the same as other years; however, since it was too late for Christmas the historic Engine #1 did not wear her usual holiday decorations, but flags were used instead. Hal Rover drove our restored fire engine at the end of the parade in the company of his family. In the past history of the parade it was called "Christmas in July". Should we now call it "Christmas in January?" And should we stay with Mr. & Mrs. Santa in future years? Let us know what you think.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE**Mark your calendar and plan to attend**

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| March 24
(Friday) | Old Firehouse Lecture Series
72-861 El Paseo, 7:00 p.m.
Speaker: Rolla Queen, archaeological historian | "Patton's Desert Training Center - and why is it still important?"
Cost: \$5.00 at the door. |
| March 26
(Sunday) | Annual Ed Mullins Memorial Picnic
Large pavilion at Civic Center Park
Keedy burgers, chips dessert & beverage
"Spotlighting Recent Retirees" from: City of Palm Desert, College of the Desert, local Teachers,
Reservations: call 760 / 346-6588 | Chairperson: Carole Cole
11:30 sign in and socialize -- Noon lunch
Cost: \$5.00 per person (pay at picnic) Raffle
and local Fire Fighters |
| April 19
(Wednesday) | Annual Spring Luncheon
Palm Desert Community Center on 43-900 San Pablo
Featured speaker: Sheila Gilligan, Assistant City Manager
Entertainer: John Malcolm Penn
Caterer: Sherman's of Palm Desert
Reservations: 346-6588 | Chairman: Dick Folkers / Decorations: Kay McCune
11:00 a.m. social time / Noon lunch served
Cost: \$20.00 per person
Checks payable to: Historical Society of Palm Desert |
| April 23
(Sunday) | (tentative) Desert Institute class
Historic Firehouse on El Paseo | "Hiking for Health and Wellness"
8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.
Instructor: Philip Ferranti
Limited to 30 people |
| April 28
(Friday) | Old Firehouse Lecture Series
Cost: \$5.00 at the door | "Rock Art of Our Desert "
72-861 E. Paseo, 7:00 p.m.
Speaker: Harry Quinn, archaeologist, geologist,
Vice-President of the Coachella Valley Archaeological Society. |
| May 13
(Saturday) | Founder's Day "2006 recipient -- Buford Crites" (and) Palm Awards
City of Palm Desert Council Chambers
Complimentary refreshments | 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
the public is welcome. |

Excerpt from Desert Magazine - June 1963

The blossoms and the bees are back, and--we might as well admit it--so are the slugs and bugs. My desert garden has been a profusion of beauty, and of work. As with all of life.

HAL & ANGIE ROVER HONORED

Our Society President and his talented wife were feted at the eighth annual "Angels of the Year" dinner dance on February 16 at Desert Island Country Club. Angie created a food assistance program through Catholic Charities and has been consistently active with them throughout the years. With Hal she has served the poor, gathered donations and trucked the food from Riverside and San Diego. They have worked with farm labor communities, a reading program at Mecca School, and are involved with the Desert Samaritans Program. We all know how Hal has revolutionized the activities and offerings of the Society since he has become president. He manages to combine compassionate activities with conventional tasks, like listening to lonely shut-ins while picking up yard sale donations. You may not know that he teaches physical education classes at Sacred Heart School every week of the school year. Besides that, he is a mainstay for the Friends of the C.O.D. Library in handling heavy boxes of books. Some of us think Hal keeps himself too busy, but we are proud of him just the same.

SOCIETY SPEAKERS

January 18, 2006	Ginny Folkers, Curator	Subject: "History of Early Palm Desert"
	Group: Unitarian Universalist Church - Women	
January	Hal Rover, President	Power Point: "Early Palm Desert"
	Group: Palm Desert Optimists	
(tentative)	Hal Rover, President	Subject: Not available
	Group: Silver Spur Homeowners Association	

Note: If your club or organization is interested in scheduling a speaker on local history, call Anne at 346-6588.

THE HOURGLASS NEWSLETTER

This is the official newsletter of the Historical Society of Palm Desert and is published four times each year. It contains at least four historical articles, today's history in the making, biographies, reports and a schedule of Society activities, new and deceased members, memorial and collection donation lists. Our members look forward to reading it. If you are looking for a gift for a special person, how about a membership in the Society?

Ginny Folkers, Editor

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